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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002068

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/SPG AND PM/RSAT

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [EATD](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#) [NI](#) [DARFUR](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE TALKS: STATUS REPORT

REF: ABUJA 2060

Classified By: Acting Political Counsellor Russell J. Hanks for reasons  
1.5 b AND d.

1. (C) Summary: Reftel described fragility of African Union-led peace talks on Darfur due to intense fighting in Darfur. AU and international observers met with the SLM on December 14 and with the JEM and GOS on December 15. The CFC representative to the talks reported that Sudanese Government troops continue on the offensive despite attempts by the AUCFC to convince them to withdraw their troops and curb the GS-supported militia. Special envoy Kingibe and acting chair Ibok adopted a tough stance, reminding the GOS delegation that the AU and the international partners would hold the GOS responsible if the AU was forced to suspend the present round of talks. A member of the GOS delegation told us that the government was encouraged and emboldened by its agreement with the UN and by UN Special Rep Pronk's comments and believed it could play for time and get away with its aggression. CFC chairman Okonkwo is due to arrive on December 16, at which time the Joint Commission will meet. AU has repeated that, if no progress is made by December 17, it will consider the present round finished and inform the AU Peace and Security Council and the UNSC. End summary.

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AU - SLM/A Meeting  
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2. (C) During a consultation meeting with the SLM/A, acting Chair Ibok reminded the members that walking away is not an option and that they should remain and talk if there is to be any successful conclusion. He told them that General Okonkwo would address their concerns about the AU, but that he expected them to remain committed to the peace process and to respect the agreements and protocols already signed. SLM leader Gabar Dosa replied that the SLM was surprised that the AU and international community had not already suspended the talks in light of the blatant GOS offensive in Darfur on the eve of the talks. He asked that the AU consider how it would implement agreements to ensure that the GOS would respect those already reached. Dosa said that there must be real progress by January 31 or it will be back to square one - i.e. war. Citing examples, Adam Shogar said that the SLM had signed other agreements, which were immediately violated by the GOS. He said that the AU and international community were not doing enough to protect civilians and, eight months after the N'djamena meeting, were unable to stop the killing and genocide. The SLM, he emphasized, wants real action on the ground. and if not, it will defend itself and its people. Special envoy Kingibe replied that pressure must be put on the GOS and that the AU would soon have its full force complement - including police co-located with Sudanese police. He then read a no-nonsense letter from General Okonkwo to the Sudanese military commander in South Darfur concerning the GOS "clear the roads" policy.

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AU-JEM Meeting  
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3. (C) AU and International Community met with JEM on December 15. Ibok informed the JEM that the Joint Commission would meet on December 16 and that the AU was strengthening its position with the GOS. He reminded them that the November JC meeting required that the GOS disarm the Jinjaweed, that the parties reveal their positions, and that the GOS end its violations. He said he hoped that the present round of talks could soon return to the agenda, adopt a Declaration of Principles, and move to a political and socio-economic agenda consistent with the Naivasha agreement. JEM spokesman Turgod Lissan replied that the GOS on-going offensive has complicated the situation on the ground and affected chances for peace. He then read a letter from the Western Region Military Commander in El Fasher outlining actions to clear the roads in line with the GOS agreement with the UN. The letter requested the GOS commanders to notify SLM and JEM to leave areas they occupied after April 8 within 4 hours. He read a list of towns and villages which covered the entire area of South and North Darfur. The GOS, said Lissan, knows what it is doing. It is not a question of violations, but rather a declaration of war. Kingibe said that the AU and international community are engaging the GOS

and urged the JEM to take a holistic view and let the AU play its part. Lissan demanded that the GOS immediately withdraw its forces and stop bombardments - all of which, he said, could be done in a day.

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Between the meetings: the AU and Partners  
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14. (C) LTC Eric Tele (Kenya), representing General Okonkwo, briefed the AU and partners following the JEM meeting. Tele said that his report from the AU Nyala sector commander revealed that the GOS was holding still in Ishma, but that the militia had moved out ahead, burning villages in clear view of the GOS and some AU observers. He said that the GOS letter demanding that the SLM and JEM leave the named areas was provocative, and that he was fully aware that the groups had occupied some of the towns for a long time. Chadian rep and Joint Commission Chair General Mohamed Ali said that the AU and partners should have the courage to say there is aggression and to apply strong pressure on the GOS. US rep reminded all that the GOS should be held responsible for any collapse of the present talks. Kingibe candidly told the group that the strategy of the GOS in its present offensive is to test the waters and international reaction and move on to even more aggressive tactics. He asked the international representatives to urge their capitals to intervene, allowing that the SLM and JEM will not enter into discussions until there are changes of the ground. If there is no progress by December 16 or 17, he said, it would be best to wrap up the session and issue a statement.

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AU-GOS Meeting  
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15. (C) The AU met with a greatly enlarged GOS delegation - including MG Izmet as the new JC representative - in hopes of receiving a clear reply to its request that the GOS withdraw its forces and end its offensive (reftel). LTC Tele repeated his situation report. Without mincing words, Ibok told the GOS that unless the military offensive - whatever its rationale - is ended, the AU would be unable to continue the talks. It is, he said, the collective view that the process is in deep jeopardy of being undermined and broken down due to the GOS offensive. He asked that the delegation convey these concerns to the GOS. The AU and its international partners, he said, needed a clear reply by December 17. GOS Chief delegate Kalifa replied that he had sent a letter to the Chair and made his case once again that the parties should all withdraw to their positions on April 8. Despite Ibok's attempts to elicit a clear reply, none was forthcoming. Members of the international community voiced their support for the AU position.

16. (C) We met privately with one of the GOS delegates the evening of December 14. The delegate, who is from Darfur and not always sympathetic to the GOS position, said that the Government was encouraged by the UN agreement and especially by remarks by Special Rep Pronk. It was also, he said, encouraged by comments coming out of the AU summit. The government was shocked by the strong reaction of the AU and international community to the latest offensive, he added, and would try to play a game of semantics and smoke and mirrors, hoping to wear down the AU and its partners. The GOS, he said, believes it can wait out the international community, which will do nothing to endanger the Naivasha process. He urged us to continue the pressure on the government and "not to blink." SLM and JEM have told us they will not return to talks with the GOS until there are concrete results on the ground in Darfur. Kingibe has spoken with SLM leader Minawi who said he would reconsider the SLM position.

17. (U) Minimize considered.  
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